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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 73rd MEETING

Chairman: Mr. ZAHID (Morocco)
(Vice-Chairman)

Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: Mr. MSELLE

CONTENTS

AGENDA ITEM 157: FINANCING OF THE UNITED NATIONS PEACE-KEEPING FORCE IN CYPRUS

AGENDA ITEM 117: FINANCING OF THE UNITED NATIONS ANGOLA VERIFICATION MISSION (continued)

AGENDA ITEM 121: FINANCING OF THE UNITED NATIONS MISSION FOR THE REFERENDUM IN WESTERN SAHARA (continued)

OTHER MATTERS

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In the absence of Mr. Dinu (Romania), Mr. Zahid (Morocco), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.40 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 157: FINANCING OF THE UNITED NATIONS PEACE-KEEPING FORCE IN CYPRUS (A/47/1001 and 1004)

1. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) introduced the report of the Advisory Committee on Financing of the United Nations Peace-keeping Force in Cyprus (document A/47/1004). The report had been prepared on the basis of an advance text in English; he had seen the report of the Secretary-General the day before. In paragraph 2 of its report, the Advisory Committee described what it experienced when it was forced to consider reports of the Secretary-General that were not in final form. The Committee trusted that efforts would be made to change what was currently a very frustrating procedure for ACABQ members. Background information on the United Nations Peace-keeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) was contained in paragraphs 3 to 7 of the report. Until 15 June 1993, UNFICYP had been financed by troop contributors, by the Government of Cyprus and by voluntary contributions obtained by the Secretary-General from donors. From 16 June 1993, the Secretary-General had proposed that the costs not covered by voluntary contributions should be assessed on Member States and a new account had been established for that purpose. The role of the Government of Cyprus and the Government of Greece in financing UNFICYP was described in paragraphs 6 and 7. The cost of the Force from 16 June to 15 December 1993 was estimated at $21.4 million gross, taking into account voluntary contributions amounting to $12.5 million. The Secretary-General proposed an appropriation and an assessment on Member States of $9 million gross ($8.6 million net). The Advisory Committee had examined those estimates in detail and had had the benefit of additional information from the representatives of the Secretary-General. The Committee noted that the Force had been restructured and that the Security Council would carry out a comprehensive reassessment of the Force before the end of 1993 on the basis of a report by the Secretary-General. The Advisory Committee requested the Secretary-General to inform the General Assembly of the administrative and financial aspects of such decisions as the Security Council might take.

2. Paragraphs 11 to 23 of the report contained comments by the Advisory Committee on the estimates. The Committee had requested that in his next report on UNFICYP, the Secretary-General should explain more clearly a number of items that affected the budget estimates, including the standards used for the period after 15 June as compared to previous standard costs. The role of the military observers and their functions also required further clarification. In the civilian component, the Secretariat should review the number of local personnel obtained on a contractual basis in order to ascertain whether such numbers were warranted by the level of services required by UNFICYP. In the Professional category, the need for all Professionals and field staff must be reassessed in the context of whether some of those functions could be combined or carried out by competent locally recruited personnel. The provision for consultancy for a

(Mr. Mselle)

Special Representative of the Secretary-General at the Under-Secretary-General level and for a resident Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General at the Assistant Secretary-General level required additional clarification and justification.

3. In paragraph 20, the Committee referred to the comments and recommendations contained in its general report on peace-keeping operations (document A/47/990) regarding representatives and envoys of the Secretary-General. The Committee believed that not only should there be a policy for the establishment of such high-level posts but criteria for determining the related emoluments. Pending the reassessment of the Force by the Security Council and taking into account the observations in its report, the Advisory Committee was advising against the establishment, at that juncture, of new posts as requested by the Secretary-General. Taking into account the confirmed contributions by the Government of Cyprus and the Government of Greece, the Advisory Committee recommended an appropriation of $8,771,000 gross ($8,443,000 net). As stated by the Advisory Committee, the amount to be assessed on Member States should be decided by the General Assembly.

4. Mr. MADDENS (Belgium), speaking on behalf of the European Community and its member States, said that the principle of collective security must translate into the financing of peace-keeping operations by assessed contributions. The European Community and its member States therefore welcomed the Secretary-General's recommendation concerning the financing of UNFICYP. The previous, voluntary financing arrangement had endured too long. The European Community recognized the crucial role that troop- and resource-contributing countries had played in the Cyprus operation for 29 years. Tribute must also be paid to the countries which made voluntary contributions to peace-keeping in Cyprus, particularly the Governments of Greece and Cyprus.

5. Mr. JACOVIDES (Cyprus) expressed the hope that discussion of the competence of the Security Council versus that of the General Assembly would not obscure the main issue before the Committee, namely the maintenance of UNFICYP as a viable operation. UNFICYP had been extremely successful in preventing a recurrence of fighting, and in contributing to the maintenance and restoration of law and order and a return to normal conditions in accordance with Security Council resolution 186 (1964). What had failed, unfortunately, despite the efforts of numerous mediators, was United Nations peacemaking and efforts to restore legality and order through international diplomacy, reconciliation and the good offices of the Secretary-General.

6. In his report on the United Nations operation in Cyprus (S/25492), the Secretary-General was quite emphatic about the need to retain a viable force. In paragraph 16, he pointed out that the mandate should determine the resources, not vice versa. The main functions of the Force remained maintenance of the military status quo and prevention of a recurrence of fighting, as well as humanitarian and economic activities to promote a return to normal conditions. The report also reiterated, in paragraph 17, that the conditions prevailing in Cyprus had not changed and that the Force's mandate and the resources required to carry it out had not been altered. In paragraph 24, the Secretary-General warned that if UNFICYP lost its capacity to maintain control of the buffer zone,

(Mr. Jacovides, Cyprus)

there would be a real danger that small incidents could rapidly escalate and threaten the cease-fire. Keenly aware of that possibility and in an effort to prevent the collapse of UNFICYP, the Government of Cyprus was contributing almost half the expenses of the restructured Force, which was unprecedented in the history of peace-keeping operations. That was not an easy burden for the Cypriot economy to bear, facing substantial difficulties as it was. His delegation therefore requested all Member States to consider the repercussions of a restructured Force on the fragile, uneasy peace that prevailed in Cyprus.

7. A correction should be made in paragraph 8 of the report of the Secretary-General (A/47/1001), which referred to the interposition of UNFICYP between "the Greek Cypriot and the Turkish Cypriot forces". The reference should be changed to "the Cyprus National Guard and the Turkish Forces", to conform with the legend of the map on the final page.

8. Mr. HAJNOCZI (Austria), speaking on behalf of Australia, Canada, Denmark, Finland, Ireland, Sweden, the United Kingdom and Austria, stressed that it was incumbent on all Members of the United Nations to share in the costs of international peace and security. Peace-keeping, however, must not be considered an end in itself or a substitute for political negotiation. Given the tremendous growth in the demand for United Nations peace-keeping activities, the UNFICYP troop contributors wholeheartedly supported a restructured Force, as envisaged in Security Council resolution 831 (1993). Voluntary contributions, which had financed UNFICYP since its inception, were not in keeping with the principle that the financing of peace-keeping should be the collective responsibility of Member States. That might have been appropriate when UNFICYP came into being in 1964, but it did not make sense 29 years later when the international situation had drastically changed. The troop-contributing Governments therefore firmly believed that a change from voluntary to assessed contributions was urgently called for, and even overdue.

9. All delegations were aware that the future of peace-keeping operations was at stake when troop contributors were not reimbursed on time. Australia, Canada, Denmark, Finland, Ireland, Sweden, the United Kingdom and Austria sympathized with those countries which had voiced concern to the Secretary-General in that regard. The situation of UNFICYP was analogous. At a time when assessed contributions were not paid on time and in full, voluntary contributions made reimbursement even less certain. As there were no resources in the Special Account, UNFICYP troop contributors had been reimbursed only until 1981, despite having claimed only a fraction of their actual costs. According to the report of the Secretary-General, the accumulated deficit due to troop-contributing countries was over $200 million, despite the Secretary-General's appeal for voluntary contributions.

10. Australia, Canada, Denmark, Finland, Ireland, Sweden, the United Kingdom and Austria requested that the Secretary-General's report on the financing of UNFICYP to the forty-eighth session of the General Assembly include discussion of the following options for the repayment of debts owed to troop contributors: requesting the Secretary-General to issue on a regular basis an appeal to all Member States to consider making voluntary contributions to a separate special account established to pay arrears; requesting the Secretary-General to transfer

(Mr. Hajnoczi, Austria)

at the end of each mandate period, starting with the period ending 15 December 1993, any unencumbered balances and miscellaneous and interest income in the UNFICYP Special Account with a view to reimbursing the costs incurred by troop contributors prior to 15 June 1993; and calling for additional contributions to the separate account from those non-troop-contributing countries which in the past had contributed regularly to UNFICYP an amount even greater than their expected assessment under the new partially assessed method.

11. Mr. FONTAINE ORTIZ (Cuba) said that his delegation's support for UNFICYP and the maintenance of international peace and security was well known. It was disturbed, however, by the fact that the Secretary-General had submitted his proposal concerning a change in the source of financing for UNFICYP to the Security Council and not to the General Assembly. Such action constituted a regrettable departure from Article 17 of the Charter of the United Nations.

12. Mr. MICHALSKI (United States) said that his delegation would comment on the Austrian proposals at a later date. Turning to the report of the Advisory Committee, he agreed with the suggestions contained in paragraph 20 with regard to the appointment of representatives and envoys of the Secretary-General at the Assistant Secretary-General or Under-Secretary-General level, apparently without the authorization of the General Assembly, creating an issue that had implications for all United Nations operations. A separate decision should be taken during the current session to request that the Secretary-General submit a report to the General Assembly at its forty-eighth session on the question of establishing high-level posts and compensation for such posts. His delegation, which would be prepared to propose the drafting of such a decision, formally requested the Secretariat to provide the Fifth Committee by 3 September 1993 with a list of all individuals receiving compensation as special representatives at the Assistant Secretary-General or Under-Secretary-General level or at an equivalent salary level. The information should include nationality, functions, length of contract and level of compensation.

13. Mr. SENGWE (Zimbabwe), noting that UNFICYP had been financed by voluntary contributions for nearly 30 years, agreed with the Belgian representative that the operation should be financed by assessed contributions. His delegation welcomed the ACABQ recommendation that those costs of UNFICYP which were not covered by voluntary contributions should be assessed on Member States. His delegation also wished to pay tribute to those Member States that had offered troops and financed UNFICYP. It was his delegation's hope that the question would be treated like other peace-keeping operations, since it did involve the maintenance of international peace and security, which was the collective responsibility of Member States.

14. Ms. SAEKI (Japan) said that her Government had supported Security Council resolution 831 (1993) but believed it should in no way prejudice the General Assembly's competence in financial matters. Her Government appreciated the intentions of the Governments of Cyprus and Greece to increase their financial contributions to UNFICYP. Any expenses incurred before 15 June 1993 should be borne by voluntary contributions. Finally, she stressed the need to streamline the structure of UNFICYP and to exert every effort to achieve the earliest possible conclusion of a political settlement.

15. Mr. KOCATÜRK (Turkey) said that Security Council resolution 831 (1993), which contained irrelevant elements of a political nature and had not benefited from any input either from Turkey or from the Turkish Cypriot side, had tried to establish a different methodology for the financing of peace-keeping operations. However, the voluntary contributions pledged by the Greeks and Greek Cypriots would affect the impartiality of the forces. Also, the financing of UNFICYP through assessed contributions rather than voluntary contributions would make cooperation with UNFICYP more difficult for the Turkish Cypriot side and for Turkey. His Government reiterated its support for the negotiations between the Turkish and Greek Cypriot leaders and believed their successful outcome would ease the burden placed on Member States by UNFICYP.

AGENDA ITEM 117: FINANCING OF THE UNITED NATIONS ANGOLA VERIFICATION MISSION (continued) (A/47/744 and Add.1 and A/47/925)

16. Mr. HOSANG (Acting Controller) said that there was an outstanding question with regard to the unencumbered balance of the United Nations Angola Verification Mission (UNAVEM II) for the period from 1 May to 15 July 1993. No precise figures were available for the period ending 15 July 1993; however, data through the end of July 1993 showed a slight overexpenditure of $5,948,650 gross ($5,723,950 net), authorized by the Advisory Committee for the operation of UNAVEM for the period from 1 May to 15 July 1993. Taking into account the adjustments required to compensate for salaries and common staff costs for the period from 15 to 31 July 1993, preliminary figures showed there were no unencumbered balances.

17. Mr. MERIFIELD (Canada) said that the Committee needed to know what the unencumbered balance was, if any, as of 30 April 1993, in order to calculate the amount of the assessment for the entire period.

18. Mr. SPAANS (Netherlands) asked whether any provision for auditing had been envisaged in the cost estimates and requested background information regarding the $1,942,000 gross mentioned in paragraph (c) of the draft decision on the financing of UNAVEM.

19. Ms. SAEKI (Japan) repeated the question regarding the $1,942,000 figure. With regard to paragraph (c) of the draft decision, her delegation wondered why the Secretary-General needed unlimited commitment authority.

20. Mr. HOSANG (Acting Controller) said that no external audit provision had been made in the cost estimates for the period from 16 July to 15 September 1993, but that did not mean that such a provision would not be made in future requirements for UNAVEM. External audit requirements were in fact determined by the external auditors, from whom the Committee sought guidance as to the amounts required to undertake a programme of work envisaged for a particular year.

21. In reply to the representatives of the Netherlands and Japan, the figure of $1,942,000 gross ($1,871,900 net) referred to in paragraph (c) of the draft decision was simply one half of the figure in subparagraph (a) (ii).

22. In reply to the question of the representative of Canada, he said that the information regarding the unencumbered balance could be provided at the Committee's next informal or formal meeting.

23. Mr. SPAANS (Netherlands), pursuing the line taken by the representative of Japan, proposed that the Secretary-General's commitment authority be limited to three months.

24. The CHAIRMAN said he took it that the Committee wished to amend paragraph (c) of the draft decision to include the words "for a period of three months" following the first occurrence of the words "15 September 1993".

25. It was so decided.

26. Mr. MERIFIELD (Canada) requested that the decision regarding the recommendation of the draft decision be deferred until the Committee received the Secretariat's answer on the unencumbered balance as of 30 April 1993, since a substantial unencumbered balance at that date would serve to reduce the actual amount of the apportionment.

27. The CHAIRMAN said he took it that the Committee wished to defer a decision on the recommendation until the Secretariat provided the additional information requested by the Committee.

28. It was so decided.

AGENDA ITEM 121: FINANCING OF THE UNITED NATIONS MISSION FOR THE REFERENDUM IN WESTERN SAHARA (continued) (A/46/783 and A/47/743)

29. The CHAIRMAN said that the General Assembly had adopted decision 47/451 B authorizing the Secretary-General to enter into commitments in an amount not exceeding $3,499,700 gross ($3,319,400 net) per month for the period from 1 March to 30 June 1993, subject to the concurrence of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, and that those resources were to be utilized from the unencumbered balance of the appropriation provided for the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO). For the two-month period from 1 July to 30 August 1993, the Secretary-General had sought and obtained the concurrence of ACABQ to enter into commitments in an amount of $6,525,380 gross. For the period from 1 September 1993 the Secretary-General estimated the monthly cost of maintaining the Mission at $3,204,600 gross. In his latest report to the Security Council (S/26185) of 28 July 1993, the Secretary-General, inter alia, had indicated his intention to submit a full report to the Council pursuant to Council resolution 809 (1993). Pending any further decisions by the Security Council on the basis of that report and the submission of the report of the Secretary-General on the financing of MINURSO to the forty-eighth session of the General Assembly, he proposed that the Committee recommend the following draft decision to the General Assembly:

"The General Assembly decides:

(a) To utilize the amount not exceeding $6,525,380 gross ($6,181,980 net) per month for the period from 1 July to 31 August 1993 from the unencumbered balance of the appropriation provided for the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara;

(The Chairman)

(b) To authorize the Secretary-General to enter into commitments in an amount not exceeding $3,204,600 gross ($3,028,200 net) per month for the period from 1 September to 31 December 1993, subject to the concurrence of ACABQ, and that these resources should be utilized from the unencumbered balance of the appropriation provided for the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara."

30. Mr. MERIFIELD (Canada), supported by Mr. SPAANS (Netherlands), requested that the Secretariat produce a short non-paper similar to the one it had provided on UNAVEM II, giving the Committee a specific breakdown of the figures.

31. Mr. FRANCIS (Australia) inquired as to the actual cash balance in the MINURSO account.

32. Mr. HOSANG (Acting Controller) said that $143 million gross ($140 million net) had been appropriated for MINURSO. Of that amount, based on past utilization of the appropriation since 17 May 1991, including the authorization provided for the last period from 1 July to 31 August 1993, there was approximately $45 million remaining. Of that amount, $20 million had not yet been collected from Member States, so that there was an actual cash balance of $25 million in the account.

33. Ms. EMERSON (Portugal) questioned whether the assessments for new Member States should be mentioned in the draft decision.

34. Mr. HOSANG (Acting Controller) said that the scheme should be set out in one of the resolutions to be adopted at the current session, and suggested that a space be left in the resolution until the number and date had been decided.

35. Mr. MERIFIELD (Canada) proposed that any decision regarding the recommendation of the draft decision be deferred until the additional information requested from the Secretariat had been provided to the Committee.

36. The CHAIRMAN said he took it that the Committee wished to defer any decision on the recommendation until the additional information requested had been provided by the Secretariat.

37. It was so decided.

OTHER MATTERS

38. Mr. HOSANG (Acting Controller), responding to questions raised at previous meetings, said that the Secretariat had distributed information regarding the use of international contractual personnel.

39. In reply to a previous question raised by the representative of Canada regarding the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC), he said that there was no infrastructure in Cambodia to support instrument flight rules. However, such a feature would be highly desirable, facilitating flights for medical evacuation and search and rescue operations. The feature would enable missions to recover personnel in darkness and marginal weather conditions. He added that the airfields to which the aircraft would carry individuals on such operations were all equipped with instrument recovery aids.

40. Mr. SPAANS (Netherlands) said that a number of delegations had asked questions with regard to UNTAC, specifically concerning the disposition of equipment. He requested that the Secretariat provide a list of equipment slated for disposal.

41. Mr. HOSANG (Acting Controller) responded that all the questions raised regarding the disposition of UNTAC assets had been answered in either informal or formal consultations of the Committee. The request for a list of items for disposal was being made for the first time. The Secretariat would attempt to provide such a list, but that would take some time since it involved contacting people in the field for information. The Secretariat could provide the Committee with the document it had provided to ACABQ when the Committee sought its guidance on the disposition of UNTAC assets. However, that report did not contain a detailed list of equipment proposed for disposal.

42. Mr. FRANCIS (Australia) said that the Committee sought information relating to what was currently happening on the ground with UNTAC assets. It was imperative that it be provided with that information as quickly as possible if it was to take control of events on the ground in terms of scheduled movements of matériel over the next two months.

43. Mr. JADMANI (Pakistan) sought clarification regarding the document on contractual personnel that had been distributed to the Committee, and specifically as to the connection, if any, between the list of countries indicated on page 2 of that document and the alphabetical listing of countries under the nationality column in the annexed table.

44. Mr. HOSANG (Acting Controller) said that the alphabetical listing of the countries in the table bore no relation to the list of countries on page 2. Information regarding contracts entered into between contractors and the United Nations could not be provided to the Committee without violating some of the conditions for concluding those contracts. Countries had been identified as A, B, C, etc. in order to avoid naming them, but, at the same time, to provide a comparison of costs between contractors from different countries.

45. The CHAIRMAN said that the Secretariat would spare no effort to provide answers to the questions that had been raised.

The meeting rose at noon.